

Understanding Protein: Science, Needs, Trends, Innovations: A Workshop

Committee

Kristin Reimers

Chair

Kristi Reimers, Ph.D., R.D.N. is a research fellow in nutrition, health & wellness at Conagra Brands, where she leads the development and execution of the company's enterprise nutrition strategy. She translates evolving nutrition science, dietary guidance, and regulatory policy into actionable strategies that inform product innovation, portfolio renovation, and consumer-facing nutrition communication. Dr. Reimers partners with cross-functional teams across research and development, legal and government affairs, and brand marketing to embed nutrition criteria into product design and ensure alignment with scientific and regulatory standards. She also helps shape Conagra's positions on nutrition policy, including labeling claims and public health guidance, supporting both compliance and business competitiveness. A trusted advisor to senior leadership, Dr. Reimers and her team interpret emerging nutrition trends and health drivers and translates them into clear risks, opportunities, and growth strategies. Prior to joining Conagra, she served as director of programs at the non-profit Center for Human Nutrition in Omaha, Nebraska. She has authored more than 50 scientific publications. Dr. Reimers earned her bachelor's degree in food and nutrition from the University of Northern Iowa, and her master's and doctoral degrees in human nutrition from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

David B. Allison

Member

David B. Allison, Ph.D., is professor of pediatrics and endowed chair through Texas Children's Hospital, as well as chief of nutrition and director of the USDA-ARS Children's Nutrition Research Center at Baylor College of Medicine. Continuously NIH-funded as a PI for over 30 years, he has authored or co-authored more than 700 scientific publications. Awards include the Presidential Award for Excellence in Science, Mathematics, and Engineering Mentoring (2006), the Harry V. Roberts Statistical Advocate of the Year Award (American Statistical Association, 2018), the Friends of Albert (Mickey) Stunkard Lifetime Achievement Award (The Obesity Society, 2021), the Bodil M. Schmidt-Nielsen Distinguished Mentor and Scientist Award (American Physiological Society, 2023), the Alumni Spotlight Award (Hofstra College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, 2024), and the Irving S. Wright Award of Distinction (American Federation for Aging Research, 2025). In 2022, he was named a distinguished lecturer by Sigma Xi, the Scientific Research Honor Society, and received the Hoebel Prize for Creativity (Society for the Study of Ingestive Behavior). In 2023, he was elected as a fellow of Sigma Xi, elected as a member of the International Statistical Institute, and inducted into the Academy for Health and Lifespan Research, the first global non-profit group focused on accelerating breakthroughs in the expansion of the human health span. In 2024, Dr. Allison was elected as a member of Cosmos Club, and in 2025, he began a term of leadership at Sigma Xi as president-elect. Elected to the National Academy of Medicine in 2012, he also serves as co-chair of the National Academy of Sciences' Strategic Council for Research Excellence, Integrity, and Trust. Dr. Allison is a staunch advocate for rigor in research methods and the uncompromisingly truthful communication of research findings. Dr. Allison received a B.A. in psychology from Vassar College and an M.A. and Ph.D. in clinical and school psychology from Hofstra University.

Nicole Tichenor Blackstone

Member

Nicole Tichenor Blackstone, Ph.D., M.S., is a tenured associate professor at the Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts University, with a secondary appointment in the Department of Biomedical Engineering. She is a sustainability scientist who evaluates the environmental and social impacts of food system innovations, interventions, and policies. Her research focuses on three primary areas of inquiry: alternative proteins and novel foods, U.S. food policy (federal, state, municipal), and healthy eating interventions. Dr. Blackstone's research has been published in high-impact journals, such as *Nature Food* and the *Lancet Planetary Health*, and has been supported by over \$13M of federal, philanthropic, and private sector funding to date. She holds a Ph.D. and M.S. in agriculture, food and environment from the Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy, and a B.A. in philosophy and religious studies from the University of Kansas.

Teresa A. Davis

Member

Teresa A. Davis, Ph.D. is the director of the Texas A&M AgriLife Institute for Advancing Health Through Agriculture, a professor of Nutrition at Texas A&M University, and a former professor of pediatrics at the Children's Nutrition Research Center at Baylor College of Medicine. Dr. Davis is recognized internationally for her studies on the nutritional regulation of protein metabolism and muscle growth. Dr. Davis received the Stockstad Award from the American Society for Nutrition (ASN) and the Animal Growth and Development Award and the Morrison Award from the American Society of Animal Science (ASAS). She was elected president of ASN and ASAS and is a fellow of both societies. Dr. Davis was a member of the U.S. 2020 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee, served as Editor-in-Chief of The Journal of Nutrition, and is Editor-in-Chief of Critical Reviews in Food Science and Nutrition. She served on the Protein Quality and Growth Monitoring Studies Committee of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine and is a member of the National Academy of Medicine. She received her doctorate from the University of Tennessee and her postdoctoral training from Washington University School of Medicine.

Erin W. Evans

Member

E. Whitney Evans, Ph.D., R.D., is a nutrition scientist and registered dietitian with 20+ years of experience working in healthcare, nutrition and obesity research, and the food industry. Dr. Evans is a director on the nutrition and scientific affairs team at Danone U.S., where she drives differentiation for yogurt brands by translating nutrition science into innovation, research strategy and consumer claims. She leads the GLP-1 nutrition workstream for Danone U.S., including the development of global nutrition standards to guide product development, a consumer website, and Oikos Fusion—the first yogurt product designed for GLP 1 users. Prior to joining Danone in 2023, Dr. Evans was on faculty at The Weight Control and Diabetes Research Center at the Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University, where her federally funded research focused on examining the role of diet in the prevention and treatment of obesity. Dr. Evans earned a Ph.D. in nutrition from the Tufts University Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy and an M.S. in nutrition from Boston University, and she is a registered dietitian by training.

Lutz Grossman

Member

Lutz Grossmann, Ph.D., is assistant professor and Fergus Clydesdale Endowed Chair in food science at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, where he has served since 2021. His research focuses on sustainable food materials and matrices using convergent food engineering approaches, integrating biotechnology, material science, and process engineering to develop next-generation protein ingredients from plant and microbial sources. Dr. Grossmann has secured over \$2.8 million in research funding as principal investigator and has received numerous honors including the prestigious Nils Foss Young Talent Award, recognized as the highest young scientist award in food science, and the IUFoST Young Researcher Award. He earned his Ph.D. summa cum laude in food material science from the University of Hohenheim (2020), M.S. in food science and engineering from the same institution (2015), and B.S. in food science and biotechnology (2012), with international research experiences in Australia, Canada, and China.

Valerie Kilders

Member

Valerie Kilders, Ph.D., is the Marshall Martin Agricultural Science and Technology Policy assistant professor in the Department of Agricultural Economics at Purdue University. Her research lies at the intersection of food marketing, behavioral and experimental economics, and consumer and producer decision-making in the agri-food system. She examines emerging food technologies, trust in science, food-away-from-home consumption, alternative proteins, and the application of modern data sources to market behavior and policy outcomes. Across these areas, she aims to generate evidence that informs both business decisions and public policy in a rapidly evolving food system. Dr. Kilders' work has appeared in leading peer-reviewed journals, including the American Journal of Agricultural Economics, Food Policy, and the European Review of Agricultural Economics. She earned a joint M.S. in agricultural economics and rural development from the University of Arkansas and a consortium of five European universities, and a Ph.D. in agricultural, food and resource economics from Michigan State University.

Stefan M. Pasiakos

Member

Stefan M. Pasiakos, Ph.D., FASN, FACSM, is professor and director of the Center for Human Performance at the Pennington Biomedical Research Center. He previously served as director of the Office of Dietary Supplements at the National Institutes of Health (2023–2025) and spent 15 years as a research scientist and division chief at the U.S. Army Research Institute of Environmental Medicine. His research expertise lies at the intersection of nutrition, metabolism, and physiological stress, with a focus on defining protein and amino acid recommendations under conditions of high energy demand, severe energy deficit, and environmental stressors. He is a recipient of the American Society for Nutrition's Vernon Young International Award for Amino Acid Research (2017) and is a fellow of the American College of Sports Medicine and the American Society for Nutrition. Dr. Pasiakos earned his B.S. in exercise physiology from Southern Connecticut State University, his M.A. in exercise physiology from Adelphi University, and his Ph.D. in nutritional sciences from the University of Connecticut (2008), after which he completed postdoctoral training as a U.S. Army Medical Service Corps officer at the U.S. Army Research Institute of Environmental Medicine (2009–2012).